

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 are cancelled in favor of new claims 22, 23, 24, and 25, respectively; claims 3, 12, 20, and 21 are cancelled as not needed; and the rest of the claims are amended for consistency of terminology and/or proper dependency. Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Sumitomo, JP 9112699, in view of Nathan, U.S. 2,615,741. According to the Office Action, Sumitomo discloses all elements recited in the claims except for the protrusion having enclosed recesses, with the recesses being delimited by the side surface of the sealing strip and the inner sides of the protrusions. However, according to the Office Action, Nathan discloses protrusions that are hollow in order to be “self-energizing” such that the claimed invention would have been obvious in view of that disclosure. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

To the extent claims 1-3, 10-12, 20, and 21 are cancelled, the rejection is moot. As indicated above, however, independent claims 1 and 10 are cancelled in favor of new independent claims 22 and 24, respectively, which recite the claimed invention with greater specificity so as to clarify the differences over the art of record. In particular, claims 22 and 24 recite that “each of the protrusions comprises a generally arcuate, relatively short length of material that is anchored at opposite ends thereof to the lateral surface [of the elongated body of the sealing member], with portions of the short length of material located between the ends thereof being spaced from the lateral surface [of the elongated body.]”¹ This is as illustrated, for example, in application Figure 8, which is reproduced below. As further expressed in claims 22 and 24, that configuration permits the protrusions to be “compressed or collapsed toward the lateral surface [of the elongated body] by pinching it in its middle to facilitate 1) insertion of the sealing member into [a] groove [in one of the members to be sealed] and 2) retention of the

¹ The term “arcuate” should not be construed as limited to smoothly flowing curves. For example, a protrusion that is staple-shaped or square bracket-shaped (i.e., shaped like a “[”]) would be deemed to be within the scope of the claims.

sealing member therein by virtue of the protrusion springing back against a sidewall of the groove.”

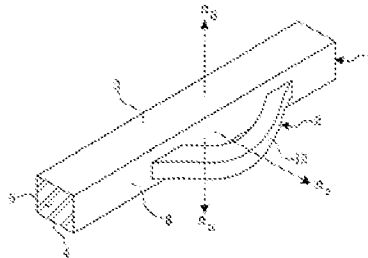
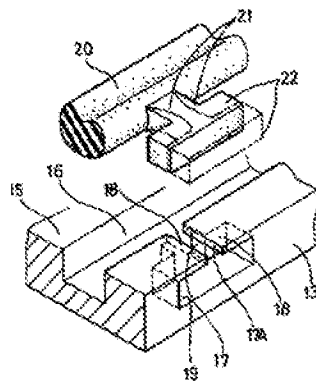


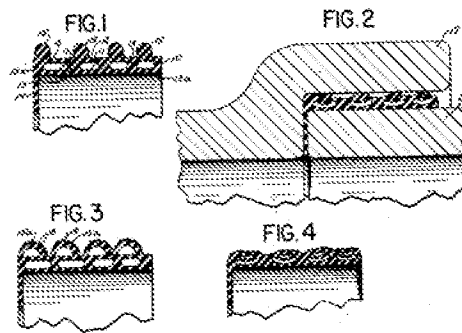
FIG. 8

Sumitomo, in contrast, does not show that. In fact, the protrusions in Sumitomo are antithetical to those that are recited in the claims. In particular, Sumitomo discloses T-shaped protrusions that are each joined at a single juncture to the main body of the seal member 20 by the bottom of the centrally positioned stem of the T, as illustrated in the Sumitomo figure reproduced below. That configuration facilitates Sumitomo's intended mode of retaining operation of the protrusions. In particular, the head or cross-bar of the protrusion is pulled away from the body of the sealing strip, which causes the stem of the T to “neck down;” the stem is inserted down through a slot 17 that has been formed into the member that is to be sealed; and the head is released such that the stem pulls it into engagement with a recess 19 in the side of the member that is to be sealed. Thus, the Sumitomo protrusions and their mode of operation are completely different than those recited in the claims.



Sumitomo

Furthermore, Nathan does not rectify that deficiency. All Nathan shows is sealing rings with circumferentially extending ridges or protrusions that are used to seal pipe-to-pipe joints, as illustrated in Nathan Figures 1-4 below, with some of the disclosed embodiments having hollow ridges.



Given the manner in which the Sumitomo protrusions operate to hold the sealing ring in place, there is no plausible way in which to modify the Sumitomo protrusions in view of Nathan to obtain the claimed invention, nor would there have been any reason to do so. Accordingly, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

The undersigned representative requests any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application.

The undersigned representative authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 14-1437, referencing Attorney Docket No.: 6730.054.PCUS00.

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